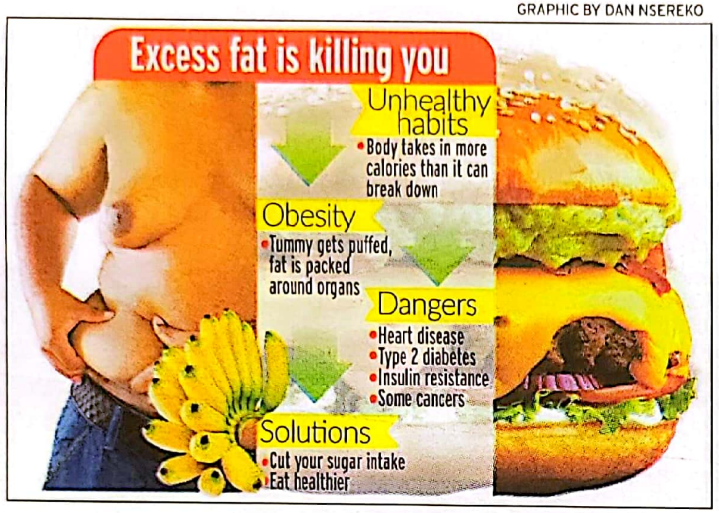


Roger Balamaga SAYS HE GAVE UP SODA, CAKE, COOKIES, AND EVERYTHING SUGARY

THE RECIPE TO A HEALTHY, FLAB-FREE LIFESTYLE

GRAPHIC BY DAN NSEREKO



I fought belly fat and won

I have been doing more recipe sharing than actual writing about my food experience, which is something I mostly do on my blog *(www.rogersbites.com)* and Facebook page (rogers' bites). Today though, I want to share something about cultivating a principled eating discipline.

Early this year, a friend shared and tagged me in a photo on facebook where I appeared along other people. It was a nice photo, everyone looked good but me. It is unlikely it was an act of malevolence, this person just probably didn't look beyond her pretty face and didn't care that my stomach was all out there free ranging. I was so taken up by the food that I forgot to suck in my stomach, so the shot caught me looking like the Budah.

That is the day I made up my mind that I was going to do something about my stomach because I have no excuse for looking like a sugar daddy before I make 30 when I do not even have the money to match the image. If you have been following this column, that's around the time I wrote about the rigorous 10-day juicing/detox program I undertook with a goal of losing weight. These were 10 days of no rice, posho, matooke, meat, beans G-nuts, fish, basically no food, but carrots and related rabbit feeds blended into smoothies. It was a successful venture, I didn't make it past the 9th day but I had lost a total of 6kg of body weight.

> **"I have no excuse for looking like a sugar daddy when I don't even have money to match the image.**

It is imperative to note that most of the body weight lost through this exercise is mostly water weight, which one can regain in no time, it takes a certain level of self-discipline and resilience to maintain the new weight and take it even lower.

My goal though was to trim down my tummy and that would require more than juice fasting. It is said sometimes a pot belly is a hormonal issue because hormones control every aspect of weight gain and loss, including one's metabolism, where you store your fat, your appetite and even your cravings. In my case though, this was just an external reflection of prolonged unhealthy feeding habits because I always had a flat tummy until I started cooking and eating irresponsibly.

The revulsion for my paunchy belly went beyond vanity's sake but also included health concerns like the fact that excess abdominal fat—particularly visceral fat, the kind that surrounds one's organs and puffs your stomach – is said to be a predictor of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, insulin resistance, and some cancers.

After the juice fast, I made up my mind to get rid of sugar completely. The research I did revealed that sugar consumption is directly tied to weight gain and obesity. It is basically a nutritiously valueless carbohydrate we consume in many forms including dextrose, corn syrup, corn sweeter, glucose, fruit juice concentrate, honey, lactose, maltose, sucrose, and the actual sugar we add to our tea which all gives us nothing but calories. Remember, when you consume more calories than your body can break down, the excess is stored in form of fat on your belly and other body parts.

I started by taking one spoonful where I used to take two, eventually I quit putting sugar in my tea completely. I also gave up soda, cake, cookies, and everything sugary. I occasionally treat myself to a slice of cake, but those treats have become fewer and far between. I don't mean to brag but…actually I mean to brag, the sacrifice is paying off and my belly fat has been tremendously burnt down. I don't only look good in my slim fit shirts — which was my original goal – but I also feel good about myself.

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